

2009

Clues beyond Sherlock Holmes: An Exhibit of the Parker Family Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Michigan

Beam, Kathryn; Hutchens, Kate

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/120244>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Downloaded from Deep Blue, University of Michigan's institutional repository

Great New Sherlock Holmes Serial

PARKER
COLLECTION
COMES
TO
UNIVERSITY
OF
MICHIGAN

See Page 22.

SOUTHAMPTON
STREET

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Clues
BEYOND
*Sherlock
Holmes*

==
AN
EXHIBIT

*SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS
LIBRARY*

*APRIL 27 -
AUGUST 29,
2009*



CLUES BEYOND *SHERLOCK HOLMES*

An exhibit of the
Parker Family Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Collection at Michigan

April 27 - August 28, 2009

Curated by
Kathryn Beam
Kate Hutchens

Special Collections Library
University of Michigan

Copyright 2009 by the University of Michigan Library
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BOARD OF REGENTS

Julia Donovan Darlow Lawrence B. Deitch Denise Ilitch

Olivia P. Maynard Andrew Fischer Newman

Andrew C. Richner S. Martin Taylor

Katherine E. White Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)

INTRODUCTION

Sherlock Holmes - the most well-known of all literary detectives. We picture the amateur sleuth, vain, aloof, tall, lithe, with a fondness for pipes, violins, drugs, capes, and deerstalker hats. We remember tales of the expert detective who solves crimes through investigation, observation, deduction, and logical interpretation of evidence.

But who was his creator, this man called Sir Arthur Conan Doyle? When did he live? What were his interests? How did he become a ‘Sir’? Does his work reflect a literary period? Was he responsible for defining the genre of detective fiction? What is the quality of his writing? What kind of a Victorian was he? How was he regarded by his contemporaries?

Such questions as these that scholars (and fans) pursue can now be answered at the University of Michigan because of the gift of the Parker Family Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Collection. Numbering over 2,000 items, the collection consists of Doyle’s poetry and his writings in fiction, true crime, war and propaganda, and spiritualism. There are early and recent editions tracing the popularity of Sherlock Holmes for more than one hundred years, photographs and other biographical materials, and a most amazing gathering of Holmes ephemera. In addition to these primary sources, the collection includes a large body of scholarship on Holmes, Doyle, and the history that shaped them both.

The Special Collections Library presents this exhibit to celebrate the acquisition of this fine collection and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Conan Doyle. We are grateful to Dr. Philip Parker, collector and donor, who continued building a collection begun by his father and uncle over sixty years ago. It is with great pleasure that we thank the Parker family and that we offer Holmes, Watson, Professor Challenger, Brigadier Gerard, fairies, and spirits to all who love fine writing and any who relish a good mystery.

Kathryn Beam and Kate Hutchens
Co-Curators

CASE 1 - WARS AND PROPAGANDA

Conan Doyle’s Knighthood

It was not because of Sherlock Holmes – not really. It was for his political writings, rather, that Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was knighted by King Edward VII of Britain on October 24, 1902. There are conflicting accounts of how appreciative King Edward was of Conan Doyle’s fiction, but as the unofficial chief propagandist on behalf of the British forces in the Boer War, the author warranted consideration for knighthood in Edward’s eyes.

Conan Doyle served in the Boer War as a surgeon in the military hospital at Bloemfontein. Around 1901, British nationals and pundits abroad criticizing the behavior of British conduct in South Africa began to gain ground, and Conan Doyle was incited to counter what he was absolutely sure was slander and libel most despicable.

When he was informed of his potential knighthood, he initially refused, saying that his pure efforts for his country would be tainted by such decoration. His mother, ever a force and confidante in Arthur’s life, insisted that to turn down such an honor would be an insult to the King. Framed in this way, Conan Doyle’s patriotism was held quite intact as he accepted the titles of “Sir” and “Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey.”

The Great Boer War. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1908.

This work was first published in 1900. Intended as history more than propaganda, with attempted neutrality lost in later publications, Conan Doyle researched much of this account while at Bloemfontein, in the wake of a severe epidemic of typhoid at the hospital. It was the first edition of this book, along with the important pamphlet *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct*, which inspired Conan Doyle’s nomination for knighthood.

These two impressions of the second English edition are of particular interest for the controversy surrounding the frontispiece and the author’s name on the spine. According to bibliographers Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson, the issue featuring Conan Doyle’s portrait (above, left) was never technically published, and the whole issue was supposedly destroyed (though a number had already been bound and made their way into the market). Conan Doyle was livid that his face should be portrayed as the hero, and said he “would destroy the whole edition rather than pass it.” He deemed that Lord Roberts, the British general, must be the one recognized for the heroic efforts, and so the second impression (above, right) was put out for sale. This is a strong representation of the indignant humility and patriotism which made Conan Doyle reluctant to accept knighthood in the first place.

The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1902.

This pamphlet, mostly excerpts from *The Great Boer War*, was the primary outlet for Conan Doyle’s arguments in defense of the British command and troops in the conflict. It was translated into numerous languages, including Welsh, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Spanish, Russian, and Hungarian. It was distributed freely throughout Europe to any takers, paid for by Conan Doyle and government sponsorship. The pamphlet was well received in many countries, and is credited with having substantially improved the global opinion of the British side in the Boer War.

The Crime of the Congo. London: Hutchinson & Co. [1909].

These 45,000 words were written by Conan Doyle over only eight days in a fury of indignation over the murderous abuses being perpetrated against the Congolese. Having been enlightened by the founders of the Congo Reform Association (Edmund Dene Morel and Roger Casement) about the horrors of the Belgian imperial regime, Conan Doyle felt it was his duty to do all in his power to disseminate the information and to push for reform. The novel *The Pools of Silence*, by Henry de Vere Stacpoole, further fueled his outrage.

After the publication of his scathing indictment of the regime, Arthur embarked upon a speaking tour of Britain and then continued to lobby for the changes he and the Association demanded. The politics of the international situation were somewhat delicate, and Rudyard Kipling had advised Conan Doyle that an all-out war might be the unintentional consequence of unilateral action by England. While Arthur claimed that a show of force could solve the problem with relative ease, his later comments show that he understood the wisdom of convening nations to compromise.

To Arms! London: Hodder and Stoughton [1914].

This was Conan Doyle’s first official publication for the War Office’s Propaganda Bureau during World War I. The pamphlet is a fully-formed and ardently anti-German statement of why Britain should go to war, and why all Her sons should join up.

This cause was perhaps more personal than others, though Arthur’s patriotism was always dear to his heart. Malcolm Leckie, the brother of his wife, had been declared missing and wounded, and was eventually pronounced dead after the British retreat from Mons, the first major battle as the Germans encroached upon France and Belgium with increasing menace towards Britain.

Green and Gibson note that the poem quoted on the cover is taken from “The Kaiser and

God” by Barry Pain. The original reads (and thus the quote here ought to read):

*To whom, whichever way the combat rolls
We, fighting to the end, commend our souls.*

***The World War Conspiracy: Germany’s Long Drawn Plot against England.* London: W. H. Smith & Son [1914].**

The material produced by the Propaganda Bureau was paid for by the government, and therefore was always freely distributed with the hope of reaching and convincing as many citizens as possible. This pamphlet is another example of Conan Doyle’s work for the Bureau.

Not satisfied to be merely a propagandist, Arthur made himself into an agitator as he lobbied hard and rallied support for specific changes in military policy, especially garnering financial support for additional equipment he believed would be beneficial. It was by his suggestion that the Navy began distributing inflatable rubber collars (proto-life jackets) to its men to aid their survival at sea. He also worked to have lifeboats made of rubber to reduce fire danger to the ships (wooden lifeboats were often thrown overboard during combat to prevent the whole ship being set ablaze).

CASE 2 - TRUE CRIME

The George Edalji Case

The George Edalji case, the bulk of which took place between 1902 and 1906, was a bizarre one. Though George was respected as a solicitor, the Edalji family was generally ostracized in the town of Great Wryly, Staffordshire. Shapurji Edalji, George’s father, was an Anglican priest and ethnically Parsee, of a community of Indian Zoroastrians. The family was thought of as ‘miscegenated,’ and George’s British mother, Elizabeth, was considered disgraced. Some of their customs seemed odd, as well, and the town voicferously gossiped about their sleeping arrangements, daughter with mother and son with father. When the family began to receive a series of anonymous threatening letters, the chief constable was convinced that George was writing and sending them himself.

A disturbing rash of livestock mutilation soon swept across the area, accompanied by letters similar to those sent to the Edaljis. These letters, however, were sent to the police, and claimed that the next victims would be young girls. A handwriting expert testified that George Edalji had written the letters, and Edalji went to prison. . . . but the attacks continued. There was significant public outcry against such flimsy evidence condemning

a man of the law, especially as further crimes were committed after his incarceration. As a result, Edalji was released after three years, but not pardoned. Conan Doyle became a spokesperson for Edalji’s innocence and good name. His efforts – represented here by the collected essays written in defense of Edalji and against Royden Sharp, the real animal slaughterer – resulted in Edalji’s full pardon. George never received any compensation for his time unjustly served.

This case is notably credited as the impetus for the creation of England’s first Court of Criminal Appeals in 1907. Before that time, a criminal’s only recourse was to appeal directly to the King for pardon.

Photo of George Edalji (From *The Story of Mr. Edalji.* London: Grey House Books, 1985).

This photo shows Edalji, who was severely visually impaired and customarily wore glasses. This “purblindness” was an important part of the defense mounted by Conan Doyle.

***The Story of Mr. Edlaji.* London: Grey House Books, 1985.**

Displayed is a sample of the letters, written by the perpetrator, that were falsely ascribed to George Edlaji. It was through Conan Doyle’s use of the details in these letters, including handwriting and language, that his investigatory techniques are thought to have resembled Sherlock Holmes’s.

The Oscar Slater Case

This description is excerpted from the back cover of the 2006 paperback edition of *Oscar Slater: The ‘Immortal Case’ of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, by Thomas Toughill, published by Sutton Publishing:

The Oscar Slater case is the most scandalous miscarriage of justice in modern British history. As Prime Minister MacDonald stated, Oscar Slater, a German Jew convicted in 1909 of murdering a wealthy Glasgow spinster, was not just innocent; he was framed by certain officers of the British Crown in order to protect the influential real culprits.

Fresh from his success in exonerating George Edalji, another wrongfully convicted man, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, devoted his sleuthing skills to freeing Slater. But such was the official opposition encountered by Sir Arthur that he achieved this only after securing the personal intervention of Prime Minister MacDonald.

Oscar Slater was somewhat of a shady character. Conan Doyle described him as “a worthless fellow,” an “unsatisfactory Bohemian,” and a “disreputable, rolling-stone of a man.” Arthur did not believe, however, that he was a murderer.

The evidence against Slater was tenuous. Ms. Gilchrist’s diamond brooch had been stolen when she had been killed. Oscar Slater was discovered to have a receipt from pawning a diamond brooch, but it was dated six weeks before the murder. The other primary evidence was witness testimony that put him at the scene, which was later demonstrated to have been trumped up, but Slater was convicted. He was released after serving eighteen years in prison, and only later was his conviction overturned on a technicality relating to the judge’s instructions to the original jury.

Conan Doyle put a considerable sum of money towards liberating and clearing the name of Oscar Slater. Slater, embittered from his small compensation from the government of £6000, refused to pay back any of the money that had been spent on his behalf. This was highly offensive to Conan Doyle. It was not as though he needed the money – it was the principle of the thing.

Photo of Oscar Slater (from *Oscar Slater: The ‘Immortal Case’ of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, Thomas Toughill. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2006).

This photo was taken of Oscar Slater in 1909 when he was incarcerated in Peterhead Prison. A notched mirror has been settled over his shoulder to show his profile, creating a composite “mugshot” with one image.

William Park. *The Truth about Oscar Slater*. London: The Psychic Press [1912].

Displayed is part of Conan Doyle’s introduction to this work in which Park makes the case to exonerate Slater. This title was published by The Psychic Press, Conan Doyle’s own publishing operation.

CASE 3 - ‘SERIOUS’ LITERATURE

***Micah Clarke*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1894.**

Micah Clarke is Conan Doyle’s first historical novel, and one which he thought to be a much more noble pursuit than detective yarns like *A Study in Scarlet*. Biographer Russell Miller sees it as an imitation of Thomas Macaulay and Sir Walter Scott, both authors

whom Arthur had read ardently as a boy and young adult. The plot is based on the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685, the attempted dethroning of the ‘papist’ King James II.

Though the work was initially rejected by *Blackwoods* magazine and the *People* newspaper, it was eventually accepted by Longmans to be published in one volume (rather than serially). Conan Doyle dedicated the work to his mother, whose own tales were purportedly the source of Arthur’s interest in the history and romance of the chivalric age. The book was so successful it required three reprintings in the first ten months. The critics were generally amicable towards the work, praising the story while finding a few problems with Conan Doyle’s history. The success was such that the first editions of Conan Doyle’s five subsequent publications all bore the banner, “by the author of *Micah Clarke*.”

***The White Company*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1891.**

A novel of history and chivalry in the vein of *Micah Clarke*, *The White Company* was laboriously researched, and Conan Doyle had hoped it would be received as a landmark in historical fiction. The novel is set in the late fourteenth century in both England and France, and is intended to recreate life during the Hundred Years War. The author is quoted as having said, “When I wrote that last line, I remember that I cried: ‘Well, I’ll never beat that,’ and threw the inky pen at the opposite wall.” His lofty ambition for the novel, that it might be a monument to British heroism for his fellow countrymen, shines through its dedication:

To the hope of the future, the reunion of the English-speaking races, this little chronicle of our common ancestry is inscribed.

To Conan Doyle’s disappointment, *The White Company* was generally heralded as a very fine boy’s adventure book. It was quite popular, though, and numerous authorized editions were produced, as well as countless pirated editions, especially in America.

***The Land of Mist*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd. [1926].**

This novel, a Professor Challenger story, deals significantly with questions of Spiritualism. Much of it is autobiographical, and many of the characters are drawn from real people in Conan Doyle’s life, often thinly disguised. The plot focuses on the love developing between Edward Malone and Professor Challenger’s daughter, Enid. The two embark on a journalistic study of paranormal and psychical phenomena. Unsubtle in its promotion of Spiritualist beliefs, the text shows Professor Challenger remaining immune to the spirit missives until a conversion in the conclusion when a long-sought truth is revealed to him in a séance.

Cheap editions of this work were published very quickly after the first editions, so they could be on the shelves upon the release of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*. Publishers

hoped that they could move copies of the work less sure to sell on the coat-tails of what was guaranteed to be a hit.

***The Lost World.* London: Hodder and Stoughton [1912].**

This novel introduces a character not nearly as iconic as Sherlock Holmes, but a lovable and reappearing one, anyway: Professor George Edward Challenger. It drew from and fed the increasing interest in paleontology in the early twentieth century. The first installment of the novel appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in April, 1912. The plot follows an expedition, led by Professor Challenger, to investigate prehistoric life on a remote plateau in the Amazon. Descriptions of the dinosaurs the characters encounter are derived from Sir Edwin Ray Lankester’s *Extinct Animals* (1905). The work was well received by critics and readers, and is thought to represent Conan Doyle at the peak of his science fiction writing, some say rivaling H. G. Wells.

Numerous film and television adaptations and re-imaginings of this story have been created over the years. The 1925 silent film, which kept the novel’s title, was populated by dinosaurs brought to life by Willis O’Brien, the same man who made the giant ape move along the streets of Manhattan in *King Kong* (1933). More recently, *The Lost World* was the title of the sequel to the film *Jurassic Park*. A film starring Will Ferrell and titled *The Land of the Lost*, based on the TV series of the same name but clearly harkening back to Conan Doyle’s novel, is set to be released on June 5, 2009.

***The Maracot Deep and Other Stories.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929.**

The title story of this collection reflects Conan Doyle’s interest in the Atlantis legend. It was originally titled “The Fabricius Deep,” though the title was altered when it began running in *The Strand Magazine* in October, 1927. Conan Doyle’s daughter, Billy (Lena Jean Annette Doyle), helped with the story by getting the mumps: while she was sick in bed, Arthur gave her the task of going through the encyclopedia and making notes about all of the fish she could find.

The plot of the story involves some deep-sea divers running into trouble on their way to the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. They are rescued by citizens of the famous lost city, Atlantis (all of whom speak Greek, of course).

Sir J. M. Barrie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. *Jane Annie; or, the Good Conduct Prize.* London: Chappell & Co., 1893.

Conan Doyle and J. M. Barrie, author of the celebrated and now classic play *Peter Pan*, met

when they played together on Barrie’s cricket team, the ‘Allahakbarries’ (a questionable play on the Arabic phrase, *Allahu akhbar*). Barrie had been commissioned to write this comic opera, but became ill as he was working (some say he had a nervous breakdown) and asked Conan Doyle to help him finish it. The production met with disastrous reviews, and both men were afterwards slightly embarrassed by the fruits of their collaboration. This failure later inspired Barrie to write a parody of Sherlock Holmes, “The Adventure of Two Collaborators.”

Conan Doyle asserted in his autobiography that he wrote the lyrics for the second act and much of the dialogue throughout. However, because the manuscript has not been found, it is impossible to tell for sure which author was responsible for which elements of the unsuccessful endeavor.

***The Adventures of Gerard.* New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1903.**

The character of Brigadier Etienne Gerard first appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in December, 1894. All of Gerard’s stories are set in the Napoleonic wars, and he is always in close contact with the Emperor, usually bungling with misguided gusto whatever plans Napoleon might have had in mind. As Conan Doyle biographer Andrew Lycett describes Gerard, he is “quixotic” and “swashbuckling” – one might be reminded of John Cleese’s character, Sir Lancelot, in the 1975 film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. All of the stories are narrated by Gerard, whose endearing pomposity shines through the prose. The comedy comes from the absurdity that arises in the narrator’s adventures and his sincerity in thinking himself wonderful.

The character was inspired by Conan Doyle’s reading of *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, the Baron having been a brigadier general, appointed by Napoleon himself, during the Hundred Days and at Waterloo. Some also say that there is a certain reminiscence of Conan Doyle’s cavalier friend and former employer, George Turnavine Budd. Budd and Conan Doyle had been mates at the University of Edinburgh, and later Conan Doyle went to work in Budd’s medical practice, where Budd cleverly and unscrupulously profited from his ample dispensing of prescriptions and brusqueness.

***Waterloo.* London: Samuel French Ltd., 1907.**

Originally a short story titled “A Straggler of ‘15,” this play consists primarily of a veteran’s reminiscence of the Battle of Waterloo. J. M. Barrie had encouraged Conan Doyle to rewrite the story for the stage for Barrie’s company to put on. Arthur did so, but he felt that Barrie’s actor-manager set to play the lead, J. L. Toole, was too comedic for the part, and Conan Doyle instead sent it to Henry Irving, an actor he had long admired. The play debuted at the Princess Theatre in Bristol on September 21, 1894, and Irving took eight curtain calls. When the play ran in London, though, while not unpopular, it received much

criticism from George Bernard Shaw, who claimed the play was in the old, sentimental style and did not attend to the realist demands of the modern theatre. The play was appreciated by King Edward VII, purportedly more so than were the author’s novels. Henry Irving was invited to Buckingham Palace to perform *Waterloo* for the visiting German Kaiser Wilhelm in 1902.

The cover of this edition states that the rights for amateur performance of the script are owned by Samuel French, Ltd. The play’s professional performances, however, were the sole property of Henry Irving, who, at the behest of his business manager, Bram Stoker, had purchased the exclusive rights for £100 upon his first reading the script in 1892.

***Songs of Action.* New York: Doubleday & McClure Co., 1898.**

Though better known for prose than verse, Conan Doyle published a good number of poems, most of which first appeared in magazines. As with his stories first serialized and later bound and re-released, compilations of the popular author’s poetry sold reasonably well.

The poem shown titled “A Parable” was originally published in the anthology *Pen and Pencil* which was sold as a benefit for the London Hospital in 1898. It demonstrates Conan Doyle’s concern with religious doctrine and its foibles.

***The Surgeon of Gaster Fell.* Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur Westbrook Company [1920?].**

Two stories are included in this volume, “The Surgeon of Gaster Fell” and “Fighting His Way.” The title story harkens back to Arthur’s father’s condition. The protagonist is a young surgeon who holds an elderly gentleman captive in a cage, seemingly for some cruel experiment. Rather, the old man is the surgeon’s insane father. Justifying his attempt to protect his father from being incarcerated in an asylum, the doctor says of the old man, “in his sane intervals [he] would beg and plead so piteously not to be condemned to one, that I could never find the heart to resist him.”

This cheaply printed paperback edition, No. 9 in the Arthur Westbrook Company’s “Great American Detective Series,” is evidence that Conan Doyle’s fiction generally – and not just his Sherlock Holmes stories – warranted mass production for the sake of mass consumption. Note that this cover appears to have been hastily and generically produced: the two people depicted could be in almost any story, and the title is spelled incorrectly - “Caster Fell” instead of “Gaster Fell”.

***The Captain of the Polestar and Other Tales.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1890.**

In 1880, in the midst of his medical studies at the University of Edinburgh, Conan Doyle accepted a position as a surgeon on an arctic whaling ship, the *S.S. Hope*. The sailors on the *Hope* often told stories, many including paranormal experiences.

Ten years later, Conan Doyle published this collection of stories, including “The Captain of the Polestar.” Biographer Russell Miller summarizes it as “a powerful short story in diary form in which a lovelorn sea captain pursues the spirit of his lost love onto an ice floe, where he freezes to death.” It also appears to be Conan Doyle’s “first attempt at ‘serious’ supernatural writing.”

As Conan Doyle negotiated the publication of *this* edition with Longmans, James Hogg, editor of the *London Society*, was putting out his own volume of a different set of Conan Doyle’s stories that his magazine owned. Arthur had sold the rights along with his works in his early days, and, though he is reported to have been furious about the pirated edition, titled *Mysteries and Adventures*, he had no legal redress.

***The Croxley Master.* New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919.**

In school, at university, and throughout his adult life, Arthur was always a sportsman. His particular passions included automobiles (to drive, especially fast cars, was then considered sport), cricket, skiing, and boxing. Six of the twelve stories in this collection highlight Conan Doyle’s enthusiasm for and knowledge of pugilism, as does his novel greatly focused on the sport, *Rodney Stone*.

Each of the stories in this volume had been previously published, not only in magazines and other anthologies, but also in previous collections of Conan Doyle’s stories, including *The Green Flag*, *Danger!*, *The Last Galley*, and others. Publishers often capitalized on the profit potential in this sort of recombination printing, especially with the work of authors as immensely famous as Conan Doyle was at the time of this edition’s release. As a result, study of the circulation of these stories is usually complicated, and often circuitous, but never boring.

CASE 4 - SHERLOCK HOLMES

Between 1887 and 1927, a period of forty years, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote fifty-six short stories and four novels documenting the adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson. Known as the “Canonical” or “Sacred Writings,” these tales trace the creation and development of the characters, their methodology in solving seemingly inexplicable murders, and Doyle’s skill in drawing his readers into a world of carriages, gas

lamps, deserted moors, and isolated country estates.

The four novels are *A Study in Scarlet* (1888), *The Sign of Four* (1890), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), and *The Valley of Fear* (1914). Well-known collections of short stories are *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1893), *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905), *His Last Bow* (1917), and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927).

A Study in Scarlet

This novel, originally entitled *A Tangled Skein*, provides the first appearance of Conan Doyle’s principal characters, with various manuscript drafts revealing their development into the characters as we know them. The main investigator, policeman John Reeves, becomes the consulting detective Sherrinford Holmes and eventually the famous Sherlock Holmes. Holmes’s story is told by Ormond Sacker, a name soon changed to John Watson, a much more appropriate name for a “second,” i.e., the character who serves as the more anonymous foil to the exotic and intriguing Holmes.

Written in three weeks during the spring of 1886, the novel first appeared in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* for 1887. It was published in book form in 1888 by the London firm of Ward, Lock and Company. On display is a facsimile of *Beeton’s* with an inscription on the title page by Conan Doyle’s youngest daughter, Jean. Also shown are interesting later printings, one published probably in the 1890s by the Hotel Taft of New York City for the reading pleasure of its customers. Another version, adapted for young readers, was published in 1927 by Wonder Books in New York.

The Sign of Four

The Sign of Four and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* are without doubt the best-known tales of Sherlock Holmes. *The Sign of Four* was the earlier of the two, and was originally titled *The Sign of the Four* (Doyle later dropped the second article). Written in August and September of 1889, it appeared in the February 1890 issue of *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, followed almost immediately in book form published by Spencer Blackett in London (October 1890) and P. F. Collier in New York (March 1891).

Critics see the Holmes character in *The Sign of Four* as fully realized, “the cultured modern consulting detective ... effortlessly superior to plodding journeymen” working for Scotland Yard and other police forces (Andrew Lycett, *The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*, p.161). Other key characteristics of Holmes stories are also present: a fast-moving plot, a setting that shifts between at least two locations, and a band of street urchins known as The Baker Street Irregulars.

This popular story has been republished many times including the selection displayed

here: two pocket-sized readers, a paperback priced at 25 cents, and a fine hardbound edition from 1938.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

This title is the first published collection of Holmes short stories in book format. It includes twelve stories, some of the most famous being “A Scandal in Bohemia,” “The Red-Headed League,” “The Blue Carbuncle,” and “The Speckled Band.” All twelve stories in the collection were first published in *The Strand Magazine*, running from July 1891 to June 1892, and all were illustrated by the established artist Sidney Paget. Paget is responsible for the enduring image of Holmes: tall and trim with sharp thoughtful features, often dressed in a cape and deerstalker hat.

The September 1892 first book edition shows on the blue cover the well-known image of The Strand Library. George Newnes published both the magazine and the Library series. He also brought out a somewhat less expensive Souvenir Edition (shown here) and a paperback “Sixpenny Series,” which included many of Conan Doyle’s titles. The copy of *Adventures* with the pictorial covers was published in 1955 by the Whitman Publishing Company in Racine, Wisconsin

The “Death” of Sherlock Holmes

After the publication of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Conan Doyle was anxious to kill off his famous detective and move on to more ‘serious’ literature (see Cases 1, 2, and 3). The death actually happened in the last story of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (George Newnes, 1893), a set of stories that continue the exploits described in *Adventures*. In “The Final Problem,” Holmes and his arch-rival Professor James Moriarty grapple with each other on a narrow ledge above Reichenbach Falls in the Swiss Alps, both men finally tumbling to their deaths far below.

Bibliographers Richard L. Green and John M. Gibson describe this situation:

The disappointment of the public ... knew no bounds when the news of Holmes’s death became known. The author was subjected to abuse and Tit Bits [a magazine also published by Newnes] announced the setting-up of a Sherlock Holmes Memorial Prize.

The Hound of the Baskervilles

In the more than one hundred years since the writing of the stories of Sherlock Holmes, this tale has emerged as the most popular among general readers. *The Hound of the*

Baskervilles was initially not intended to involve Mr. Holmes, but the pressure was considerable for a revival of the character, and Conan Doyle was looking for a strong central figure for his new story about a legendary hound terrorizing the inhabitants of Dartmoor, southern England’s largest remaining open space at the turn of the twentieth century.

Thus Sherlock Holmes is “reborn,” a miraculous survival from his terrible accident at Reichenbach Falls. He emerges in the August 1901 issue of *The Strand Magazine* and again in George Newnes’s first book edition of 1902 (Souvenir Edition on display) and the first American edition from McClure, Phillips & Company, also published in 1902.

***The Hound of the Baskervilles.* Illustrated by Jason Powers. [Lakewood, Colorado]: Micawber Fine Editions, 1999.**

Innumerable reprintings and adaptations of this story have appeared throughout the decades (see Wall Case I). One of the more recent is this fine publication limited to 150 copies and signed by both the illustrator, British artist Jason Powers, and the author of the “Afterward,” R. L. Dean.

His Last Bow: Some Reminiscences of Sherlock Holmes

The story “His Last Bow” was Conan Doyle’s response to a question he was asked while visiting France in 1916. French General Georges Humbert asked him what Sherlock Holmes was doing for the war effort. Doyle’s initial answer was that Holmes was too old for active service, although a fuller and less flippant answer became this story in which Holmes captures a German spy just as he is about to flee the country with British secrets.

“His Last Bow” was published in the September 1917 issue of *The Strand Magazine* and then as the last story in this collection brought out by John Murray in 1917. The ending conversation between Holmes and Watson (shown here) reveals Doyle’s Victorian ideals of scientific and intellectual brilliance (Holmes) and moral and cultural sturdiness (Watson). Watson is “the one fixed point in a changing age,” an age that will soon experience a cold and bitter wind blowing over England from the east.

The dust jacket on display comes from an edition published by the A. L. Burt Company in New York. The book is not dated but it probably appeared shortly after the first American edition by George H. Doran Company, also in 1917.

CASE 5 - SPIRITUALISM

***What Does Spiritualism Truly Teach and Stand For?* London: Psychic Press [1928].**

To give a general sense, Spiritualism is the belief that the souls of those who have died persist in Heaven, and that those souls have access to truths of the past, present, and future, and possess the means to impart their knowledge unto the living. One might associate these ideas with séances and Ouija boards.

Historians tend to attribute the great increase in popularity of Spiritualism in the 1910s and ‘20s to the despair that followed the First World War. Confronted with so much grief, many people seemed to crave and be convinced by the hope Spiritualism offered them. The arguments for life after death, as well as the opportunities to communicate with loved ones who had perished, made believers out of thousands, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. One facet of Spiritualism that Conan Doyle found most appealing (and also convenient) was his sincere belief that its view of the nature of life beyond death was easily compatible with every religious faith throughout the world.

***The History of Spiritualism.* London: Cassell & Co, Ltd., 1926. Vol. 2.**

This huge work – two volumes, both this size – accounts for the minutest details of Spiritualism, down to the compositional nature of ectoplasm. The author claimed in a letter to the dedicatee of the work, Sir Oliver Lodge, that it would be “a dignified and balanced book, never extreme in statement.” Critics of the work observed a less neutral execution. A review in *The London Times* asserted that “[h]is tone in the present book often approximates more to that of the Hebrew prophet denouncing the wrath to come [indicating the notions Conan Doyle puts forth regarding the Great War as a sign of impending Armageddon] than to that of the apologist anxious to conciliate opponents.”

According to bibliographers Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson, this publication was essentially a collection of articles, some composed by Conan Doyle, and many started (and a handful completed) by Leslie Curnow, a noted expert on Spiritualism. The expansiveness of the work speaks to Conan Doyle’s unfaltering confidence in both the merit and the marketability of the ideas therein. The publishers were less confident in sales, and insisted that the famous name of Conan Doyle be given sole authorship credit, and that a cheaper edition be produced for sale very quickly.

A Public Debate on “The Truth of Spiritualism.” London: Watts & Co. [1920].

This famous stand-off between Joseph McCabe of the Rationalist Press Association and Conan Doyle sold out a month in advance. McCabe had been one of the staunchest critics of Conan Doyle’s Spiritualist writings and espousals. The debate was generally thought to be a draw, as both men made their cases with conviction and efficacy.

In a letter to his mother in anticipation of the event, Conan Doyle said of the “materialists,” meaning McCabe’s side, “They are good men – the thinking ones – but their creed is negative and hopeless.” He also wrote to the Ma’am after the debate, and said of his opponent, “I don’t dislike McCabe, who has had a hard fight.... He seems all brain but wanting, perhaps, in heart.”

An Open Letter to Those of My Generation. London: Psychic Press [1929].

Conan Doyle here uses a pointed argument for Spiritualism aimed at a particular demographic: the elderly. Interspersed with the usual arguments and evidence for his cause is a rhetorical appeal to the utility of Spiritualism to bolster personal gratification. To summarize, Sir Arthur seems to be asking readers, ‘If you are assured to pass out of this world soon, why would you *not* choose to believe that there is a better one beyond, and that this one will not be utterly lost to you?’

Like a number of his Spiritualist writings, this pamphlet was printed by the Psychic Press, Conan Doyle’s own publishing house, and sold by his affiliated Psychic Bookshop, which was run by his elder daughter, Mary. The press and shop were both created for and dedicated to spreading the words of Spiritualism. The Bookshop, opened in January of 1925, was located just around the corner from Westminster Abbey in London. In addition to retail, the Bookshop had a circulating library for paying subscribers, a directory of mediums for consultation, and a small museum of spirit photographs and other Spiritualist artifacts.

Pheneas Speaks. New York: George H. Doran Company [1927].

Conan Doyle saw Pheneas as a sort of family guardian angel. His messages were the result of Jean Conan Doyle’s prolifically demonstrated talent for automatic writing. Conan Doyle referred to their family as a “home circle.” A “circle” is the term for a group that participated in séances together and was able to provoke spirit communication.

Pheneas was supposedly the spirit of a thousand-years-dead Arabian chieftain. His first contact with the family was on December 10, 1922, and he continued to speak to them through Arthur’s wife sporadically for years. He would give somewhat generic advice

and praise to the family members, and sometimes offered predictions. In the summer of 1924, Pheneas informed the family that the end of the world was drawing near, and much detail was given. Upon Pheneas’s instruction, Conan Doyle refrained from transmitting this foretelling of doom in *Pheneas Speaks*, condensing it into the subsequent pamphlet, “A Word of Warning.”

A Word of Warning. London: Psychic Press, ca. 1924.

A follow-up to *Pheneas Speaks*, this pamphlet emphasizes the apocalyptic predictions given to Conan Doyle and his family in his séances with the spirit, Pheneas. The notion conveyed is that World War I was merely the prelude to the Armageddon humanity would face if ways were not righted. Pheneas instructed Conan Doyle not to publish this message of paramount importance in the regular press: “Publish it at the lowest possible price so that all may have it.”

The page here displayed demonstrates multiple levels of rhetoric. The warning that the “political and natural convolutions” [*sic*] will come unless the world becomes more enlightened is, paradoxically, an argument both for *and* from the Spiritualist perspective: one must embrace Spiritualism to believe in the transmission of such a message, and those who do will be spared the reckoning to come. The arguments used here to support the validity of the spirit’s message are very typical: 1. the medium could not have known such things herself; 2. the message *appears* to be coming true after the fact; 3. other spirits/mediums corroborate the message.

The Case for Spirit Photography. New York: George H. Doran Company [no date].

Photography was an interest of Conan Doyle’s from his youth. He wrote a number of essays on photography, which were collected in a publication edited by John Michael Gibson and Richard Lancelyn Green (Conan Doyle bibliographers). The prominence of spirit photography in the early twentieth century was a major factor in Conan Doyle’s embracing Spiritualism as a faith supported by evidence. His earlier religious quandaries were an effect of his empirical mind. He had turned quite willfully against the Catholicism instilled in him at the Jesuit Stonyhurst College as the general tide of rationalism had risen. As Conan Doyle increasingly proselytized on behalf of Spiritualism, many dismayed that the creator of the unforgivingly rational Sherlock Holmes could be so duped. Photographs seemed to Conan Doyle a reasonable demonstration of ‘scientific truth’. He rarely accepted arguments of fraudulent images as more than circumstantial evidence, and dismissed as logical fallacy the discrediting of the phenomenon based on the few solidly proven cases of manipulation.

J. J. Spark. *Scientific and Intuitional Palmistry.* Westminster: Roxbidge Press, ca. 1917.

Here we see evidence that Conan Doyle did not enthusiastically embrace all psychical phenomenon and perception out of hand. For all the claims of his utter gullibility, Conan Doyle here asserts his discretion in his inscription on the title page of this work on palmistry (i.e., the reading of palms for divination or prognostication), saying, “I have never been able to make up my mind about palmistry.”

Harry Houdini. *A Magician Among the Spirits.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1924.

Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle met in 1920 while Houdini was on tour in Great Britain. The two were unlikely friends, opposites in so many ways. As Conan Doyle biographer Robert Miller phrases it, “Conan Doyle wanted to believe and did, Houdini wanted to believe but could not; about all they shared was an unshakeable belief in their own view.” When he did eventually decide that all psychical phenomena were staged, Houdini’s crusade was to debunk all the fraudulent mediums. Conan Doyle did not resent this, though; rather, he encouraged the denunciation of those who would damage the reputations of the true mediums. Also, Conan Doyle remained convinced that it was by “mediumistic powers” that Houdini himself was able to perform his stunts and escapes, though the magician vociferously objected that his craft was mere illusion.

Houdini often stated that he was open to believing if anybody were able to offer unmitigated proof, and he tried out many mediums, concluding each time that the phenomena were bunk. The Conan DoYLES invited him to a séance in their home that later became the spark of contention that derailed their friendship. Jean Conan Doyle was supposed to have automatically written messages from Houdini’s mother, whom Houdini had, of his own profession, dearly wanted to contact. Conan Doyle asserted that Houdini was quite rattled by the experience and that all must have been genuine. Houdini later said that he had felt no presence of his mother, that the crosses Lady Conan Doyle etched at the top of each page of writing could not have represented the thoughts of his Jewish mother, and that the fluent English written by Jean could also not have been her words, as – being a Hungarian immigrant – she had only ever spoken broken English.

Spirit photograph of Houdini ‘with’ Abraham Lincoln

This photograph shows Houdini deliberately faking the presence of Abraham Lincoln’s spirit. He often sought to convince people of the falsehood of mediumistic activity by mimicking it and making known his methods.

The Return of Arthur Conan Doyle, edited by Ivan Cooke. Liss, Hampshire: The White Eagle Publishing Trust, 1955.

Spiritualism’s followers could hope for and expect nothing else but that one of their greatest champions would reach out to them from the other side. After his death on July 7, 1930, Conan Doyle’s likeness appeared in many spirit photographs. Numerous mediums recorded messages from him, often jubilant affirmations of the pleasures of the afterlife and assurances of the gratification awaiting those of the Spiritualist faith.

The White Eagle Publishing Trust is an affiliate of the White Eagle Lodge, a religious organization based in Montgomery, Texas. The White Eagle Lodge promotes the faith of Spiritualism in America, and, according to their website, currently has thousands of members.

James M. Gillis. *False Prophets.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928; **Jane T. Stoddart.** *The Case Against Spiritualism.* New York: George H. Doran Company, ca. 1919.

Spiritualism had perhaps as many staunch critics as firm advocates, and vocal ones, at that. In *False Prophets* (above, left), Gillis pokes at Conan Doyle’s assertions of his own strength of body and mind as fortifications against his being hoodwinked. He claims that no such qualities determine who will and will not be susceptible to the wiles of the mediums. Scientists, neither, are immune to the Spiritualist trickery.

Stoddart’s arguments are more that Spiritualism is not just false, but a harmful practice. She cites a case of automatic writing decreasing the capacity of the subject for genuine writing. Conan Doyle, being such a proponent of automatic writing, and having so praised his wife’s own gift for it, is thus targeted as a spokesperson for the dangerous activity.

The pencil marks on the pages of *The Case Against Spiritualism* were made by the donor of this collection, Dr. Philip Parker, in his avid research and efforts to find references to Conan Doyle, especially in relation to the subject of mental health and psychical matters.

Untitled manuscript notes, ca. 1919.

These notes, handwritten by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, appear to have been taken during a ‘sitting,’ or séance. The context of the creation of this document is unknown, but one might infer from the content that a portion of the communication is coming from Arthur’s eldest son, Kingsley, who died of pneumonia in 1918 (note the reference to pain in the lungs). If the spirit is supposed to be Kingsley, he appears to be referring to his mother, Arthur’s first wife, Louise ‘Touie’ Conan Doyle, who died in 1906. Malcolm Leckie, the brother of Arthur’s second wife, Jean, is also mentioned; he died early in World War I.

The two pages shown are the respective sides of one sheet of paper. It is difficult to tell which is the first page, increasing the difficulty in following the flow of thought.

***The Edge of the Unknown.* London: John Murray, 1930.**

This book was the last work put out by Conan Doyle before he died. It is a collection of essays, most of which were published elsewhere before being collected here. He composed the introduction just months before he passed away. His assured belief in the beneficence of mortality left Conan Doyle quite sanguine in the face of his own death. He wrote to a friend, “There is a chance that I may talk it over with Houdini himself before very long.”

CASE 6 - FAIRIES

Richard Doyle (1824-1883). *In Fairyland.* New York: Viking Press, 1979.

Richard Doyle, or Dick or Dicky Doyle, as he was alternately known, was Charles Altamont Doyle’s older brother and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s uncle. Like his father before him - John Doyle (1797-1868), a famous political cartoonist who was known by his penname, “H.B.” - he was best known for his drawings in the nineteenth-century satirical magazine *Punch*. His illustrations were also commissioned for literary publications like William Thackeray’s *The Newcomes*. Dicky Doyle is also famous for his fanciful depictions of a world inhabited by fairies and gnomes. Fairies are a prominent motif in Victorian artwork and literature.

In Fairyland was first published by Longman, Green & Co. in 1870. The text here presented as a caption was written by Andrew Lang for his amalgamated edition of Dicky Doyle’s work, titled *The Princess Nobody*. The documentary tone of both the prose and the image represent a common approach to Victorian fairy art, seeming to capture the creatures’ everyday dealings (usually mischievous encounters with the tinier elements of Britain’s forests and fields).

Charles Altamont Doyle (1832-1893). *The Doyle Diary.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1978.

Charles Altamont Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s father, was primarily employed as a menial assistant in the Department of Works in Edinburgh, Scotland. He also contributed illustrations to some magazines. Charles was never able, however, to live the glamorous artist’s life of his London-based brother, Dicky Doyle. Always mentally troubled and intro-

verted, Charles turned to drinking. In 1881 he was institutionalized by his family. Charles resided in three different asylums before he died in 1893, the cause recorded as epilepsy.

The Doyle Diary, as it has been titled for publication, was a sketchbook kept by Charles while a resident of Sunnyside House at the Montrose Royal Lunatic Asylum. It contains scenes of common life (a woman scrubbing a floor), morbid self-portraits (Charles greeting a skeletal Grim Reaper with the caption “Well Met”), and illustrations of fanciful fairy characters, often containing clever visual puns. The page shown also includes Charles’s notes regarding reviews of Arthur’s work “The Mystery of Cloomber,” which included one of Charles’s illustrations, thereby demonstrating a cognizance of the greater external world, despite his propensity for detachment.

***The Coming of the Fairies.* London: Hodder and Stoughton [1922].**

What began as a nostalgic and semi-whimsical article for *The Strand* was spurred on by the Cottingley fairy photographs to become another element of a devout spiritualist’s faith. The notion that fairies could be captured on film fit in well with Conan Doyle’s ideas about spirit photography. In his recent biography of Conan Doyle, Andrew Lycett speculates on one aspect of Arthur’s credulity: “If he could prove [the fairy photos’ truth], he would go a long way to rehabilitating the memory of his father and showing that, far from being mad, Charles Doyle had the evolved sensibility to communicate with higher beings.”

Edward Gardner, a member of the Executive Committee for the Theosophical Society (whose portrait is the frontispiece for this book), visited the Wright family after the photos surfaced. He also had one of his expert spirit photograph ‘doctors’ examine the glass plates and, convinced, confirmed to Conan Doyle that all was on the up and up. Gardner and Conan Doyle collaborated on this book, *The Coming of the Fairies*, though Conan Doyle is named as the author.

The page shown demonstrates Conan Doyle’s frustration with skeptics in the debate over the authenticity of these fairy photographs and in the Spritualism debate, generally. The inclusion here of what he refers to as “the best of the critical attacks” against the Cottingley girls’ integrity shows Conan Doyle’s desire to prove his side’s virtue through vigorous discourse, as well as his rhetorical savvy in doing so. The article he includes also shows how identifiable he was as a spokesman of this cause.

The Cottingley Fairy Photographs

One summer day in 1917, two cousin girls, Frances Griffiths (a.k.a. “Alice” in the early publications of the photographs) and Elsie Wright (a.k.a. “Iris”), were playing near a stream. Frances fell in the water, and, knowing that her mother would be angry at her soaking dress, claimed that it had happened while they had been playing with fairies. Faced with

disbelief from Frances’s mother, the two girls set out to “prove” their story. They cut out pictures of dancing fairies from *Princess Mary’s Gift Book* and borrowed Elsie’s father’s Midg camera. Elsie took a photograph of Frances with four of the fairy cut-outs ‘dancing’ in the foreground (see Frances and the Fairies).

Thus was sparked what Elsie Wright referred to in 1988 as a joke “that was meant to last two hours, and it lasted seventy years.” Because so little was known at the time about photographic technology, debate raged over what would even constitute conclusive evidence that the photographs were either real or faked. Both the fact that the negative had not been tampered with and the assumed innocence of youth supported the girls’ tale, but, as *John O’London’s* weekly put it, “It is easier to believe in faked photographs than fairies.” Though he was derided for what many saw as his gullibility, Conan Doyle never appeared to doubt the truth of the girls’ story or their photographs, and he defended them in numerous publications in addition to *The Coming of the Fairies*.

It was not until 1983 that Griffiths and Wright made any confession regarding the hoax, and, until she died, Griffiths maintained that they *had* actually seen fairies by the Cottingley stream.

Frances and the Fairies

(This title of the photograph is from *The Coming of the Fairies*. This photograph was also distributed as “Alice and the Fairies,” as in this facsimile of a print purchased separately from the book.)

Photograph taken by Elsie. A bright sunny day in July 1917. The “Midg” camera. Distance, 4ft. Time, 1/50th sec. The original negative is asserted by expert photographers to not bear the slightest trace of combination work, retouching, or anything whatever to mark it as other than a perfectly straight single-exposure photograph, taken in the open air under natural conditions. The negative is sufficiently, indeed slightly over-exposed. The waterfall and rocks are about 20 ft. behind Frances, who is standing against the bank of the beck. A fifth fairy may be seen between and behind the two on the right. The colouring of the fairies is described by the girls as being of very pale pink, green, lavender, and mauve, most marked in the wings and fading to almost pure white in the limbs and drapery. Each fairy has its own special color (Caption text transcribed from The Coming of the Fairies.)

Elsie and the Gnome

Photograph taken by Frances. Fairly bright day in September 1917. The “Midg” camera. Distance, 8 ft. Time, 1/50th sec. The original negative has been tested, enlarged, and analysed in the same exhaustive manner as [Frances and the Fairies]. This plate was badly under-exposed. Elsie was playing with the gnome and beckoning it to come on to her

knee. The gnome leapt up just as Frances, who had the camera, snapped the shutter. He is described as wearing black tights, a reddish-brown jersey, and a pointed bright-red cap. The wings are more moth-like than the fairies and of a soft, downy, neutral tint. The music of the pipes held in his left hand can just be heard as a tiny tinkle sometimes if all is still. (Caption text transcribed from The Coming of the Fairies.)

William Marriott’s fake spirit photograph of Conan Doyle with fairies, Dec. 1921.

As with other spirit photography, skeptics attempted to discredit the authenticity of the fairy photographs by demonstrating how easily they could create their own superimposed images. This is one example, and a particularly pointed one for its use of Conan Doyle as its primary subject. Another example of this strategy of debunking is Houdini’s fake spirit photograph of himself with Abraham Lincoln (see Case 5).

WALL CASE I - FAMILY PHOTOS; *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (FILM)

Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on May 22, 1859, into a family of Doyles who were prosperous Irish-Catholics enjoying a prominent position in society. His parents were Mary (Foley) Doyle and Charles Altamont Doyle, a civil servant and artist, a chronic alcoholic, and one of the few in the family who did not find a career of accomplishment.

This photo, dating from 1894, shows the extended family. Arthur is the fifth from the right in the back row, standing with his daughter Mary and his son Kingsley just to his right. His first wife, Louise (Hawkins) Conan Doyle, and his mother Mary Doyle are seated in the front center.

Arthur, always the sporting man, who found much enjoyment in cricket, boxing, golf, horse-back riding, and even billiards, also embraced motoring as a sport. He was especially attracted to racing cars, as seen in this undated photo of Arthur with his son Adrian. He owned several cars, one of the first being a medium-sized 10-horsepower blue Wolseley with red wheels, but no convertible top. He raced this car in April 1905, winning a local time trial. Driving fast caused him to be fined for speeding, one time when he was doing 30 mph in a 20 mph zone. His response was that he didn’t know his car could travel that fast.

Arthur at his writing desk, undated but probably during his middle years.

Arthur and his second family at Waterloo Station departing for the United States in March, 1923. Arthur and Jean (Leckie) Doyle are with their three children, left to right Lena Jean, Adrian Malcolm, and Denis Percy. The purpose of this trip was a lecture tour, complete with interviews and séances, all intended to prove the validity of spiritualism and the reality of the spirit world.

Arthur’s death on July 7, 1930, occurred at his home, Windlesham, in Crowborough, Sussex. The funeral service was conducted by the spiritualist Reverend C. Drayton Thomas. This photo depicts the large oak coffin resting on trestles, surrounded by many floral wreaths, and a crowd of mourners. Conan Doyle was buried in a plot on the grounds of Windlesham.

***A History of Sherlock Holmes in Stage, Films, T.V. & Radio.* Sherman Oaks, Calif.: E-GO Enterprises, 1975.**

One of the best-known actors to play Sherlock Holmes was Basil Rathbone (1892-1967). Beginning with the film version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939) with Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson, the pair acted in fourteen Holmes movies. Scholar and actor Amnon Kabatchnik in his book *Sherlock Holmes on the Stage* says that Rathbone and Bruce are “the flagship embodiments of the Great Detective and his Boswell.”

The 1939 film poster shown here and this publication from 1975 reproduce some of the images of the original film with the famous Rathbone/Bruce duo.

WALL CASE II - SHERLOCK HOLMES ON STAGE

The stories of Sherlock Holmes were adapted for the stage very soon after their initial publications. As early as 1899 the American actor-director-playwright William Gillette created a play simply entitled ***Sherlock Holmes***. Based on the short stories “A Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Final Problem” plus the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, the play premiered in October 1899 at the Star Theatre in Buffalo, New York. By November it opened at the Garrick Theatre on Broadway and enjoyed a run of 256 performances.

The souvenir program “**William Gillette in *Sherlock Holmes***” (New York: R. H. Russell, 1900), shown here in a facsimile reprint, contains photos of Gillette in the role of Holmes from various productions throughout his career. His last performance as Holmes at the age of eighty-two culminated a lifetime of more than 1,300 performances in the United States and England. He died in 1937.

The play ***Sherlock Holmes*** was especially popular through the 1930s, with many touring companies and productions garnering huge ovations. But it wasn’t until 1974 that Londoners were granted a revival. The Royal Shakespeare Company’s production, a somewhat streamlined version of Gillette’s script, opened at the Aldwych Theatre on January 1 of that year. The response was so overwhelming that the entire production moved on to Washington and then to New York for standing-room-only performances. The **poster** on display advertises the New York production at the Broadhurst Theatre.

Re-stagings of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Production of *Sherlock Holmes*

Among many productions throughout the United States was this one starring Leonard Nimoy as Holmes, given at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit from February 10 to March 13, 1976. The play also came to Ann Arbor during the 1976-77 season with John Michalski as Holmes. Then in October 2007, Oakland University’s Meadow Brook Theatre hosted an adaptation by Steven Dietz entitled *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*. Playbills for the Fisher Theatre and the Meadow Brook Theatre productions are on display.

The Crucifer of Blood written by Paul Giovanni is a 1978 adaptation of *The Sign of Four* (see Case 4). It was first produced at the Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo in January 1978, moving to the Helen Hayes Theatre in New York in September. Paxton Whitehead played Holmes and Glenn Close was Irene St. Claire (a change of name from the original Mary Morstan in the novel).

As with the play *Sherlock Holmes*, there were revivals beginning as early as 1980. A 1981 production at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles starred Charlton Heston as Holmes and Jeremy Brett as Dr. Watson. A made-for-television movie was broadcast in 1991 and again in 2002.

WALL CASE III – *COLLIER’S* COVERS

Collier’s Weekly. New York: P. F. Collier. Vol. 32, no. 22 (February 27, 1904) and Vol. 34, no. 5 (October 29, 1904).

American publications of the Sherlock Holmes canon were not illustrated as consistently as the English appearances, perhaps due to the influence in Britain of *The Strand Magazine* and artist Sidney Paget. In 1903, however, a major shift occurred with Collier’s decision to publish all thirteen stories from *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. The artist selected was Frederic Dorr Steele (1873-1944), considered now to be the most important American illustrator of Holmes. Many describe Steele’s images as the classic, final, and unalterable portrait of Sherlock Holmes, although Steel himself said he borrowed the image from William Gillette (see Wall Case II).

On display are two issues of *Collier’s Weekly*, the one from February containing the sixth story, “The Adventure of Black Peter,” and the one from October illustrating the tenth story, “The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez.”

WALL CASE IV - PARODIES, PASTICHES, SATIRES, AND BURLESQUES

Wonderfully humorous parodies, pastiches, satires, and burlesques started almost immediately after the publications of the original Sherlock Holmes stories. It has been estimated that since that time perhaps as many as 800 separate parodies or pastiches have been done of Holmes.

One of the first was this famous eight-part burlesque, *The Adventures of Picklock Holes*, written by Rudolph Chambers Lehman, and published in *Punch* beginning with the August 12, 1893 issue. Shown here is part IV, “The Escape of the Bull-Dog,” in the September 2 issue. Lehman published under the inspired byline of “Cunnin Toil.” The eight adventures present Holes whose reasoning, while never correct, is always astounding, and who, with the help of Dr. Potson, always somehow manages to get his man.

This 1975 reprint of the Holes stories offers a more modern caricature of Holmes drawn by freelance editorial cartoonist Hank Hinton in 1974. The original was first published in the book review section of the *Los Angeles Times*.

S. Beach Chester. *The Arsene Lepine-Herlock Soames Affair*. Boulder, Colorado: The Aspen Press, 1976.

The competition between the English detective Sherlock Holmes and French gentleman-thief and detective Arsène Lupin was initially a creation of Maurice Leblanc in his *The Exploits of Arsène Lupin* published by Harper and Brothers in 1907. In the last story of that collection, “Holmlock Shears Arrives Too Late,” the two men end the story with a promise to meet again.

In 1912 American writer S. Beach Chester created this double parody in which Arsène Lupin becomes Arsene Lepine and Holmlock Shears is transformed into Herlock Soames. Aspen Press has reprinted Chester’s story with delightful illustrations by Coloradan artist Rob Pudim.

Sleuth, Playbill. Vol. 8, no. 5 (May 1971)

The play *Sleuth* was written by Anthony Shaffer in 1970. It opened in London in November 1970 and enjoyed a run of 1,222 performances at the Music Box Theatre. Shaffer adapted the play for a film version in 1973 starring Sir Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. It won the 1971 Tony Award for Best Play and in 1973 it was selected for Best Screenplay.

Sleuth is a brilliant parody of the Conan Doyle / Agatha Christie country-house thriller. The story is set in a manor house in Wiltshire, England, and incorporates all the time-honored technical devices present in such murder mysteries. Critic T. E. Kalem wrote that the play is “a consummate spoof of thrillers, as keen in satire as suspense.

Eve Titus. *Basil of Baker Street*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958; *Basil in Mexico*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

Eve Titus is a writer of children’s fiction who has created two marvelous characters known to many: Cheese-Taster Anatole and Detective Basil. Basil of Baker Street is the Sherlock Holmes of the Mouse World who, with his good friend Dr. Dawson, solves challenging mysteries that baffle ordinary policemen. Titus introduced her characters in *Basil of Baker Street*, but this title was quickly followed by *Basil and the Pygmy Cats*, *Basil and the Lost Colony*, *Basil in Mexico*, and *Basil in the Wild West*.

Artist Paul Galdone illustrated both Titus’s Anatole and Basil series. *Basil of Baker Street* is dedicated to Doyle’s son Adrian Malcolm Conan Doyle. *Basil in Mexico* is dedicated to The Baker Street Irregulars.

Men Only. Vol. 47, no. 185 (May 1951).

Men Only is a contemporary British soft-core pornographic magazine begun in 1935 by C. Arthur Pearson who at the time was also publishing *The Strand Magazine*. Pearson made the distinction between the two journals by saying that *Men Only* was intended solely for men readers. In the first issue he wrote, “We don’t want women readers. We won’t have women readers”

Throughout the magazine’s history, humor has been central to many of its articles and artistic presentations. Besides its ‘art’ nudes and racey cartoons, it carried good articles, fiction, and fine caricatures of famous people, such as this one of Sherlock Holmes drawn by the unidentified artist Hynes.

WALL CASE V - ARTIST’S PRINTS

Douglas E. West. *Sherlock Holmes Prints*. London: Solomon & Whitehead (Guild Prints) Ltd., 1979.

British artist Douglas E. West (1931-2008) is well-known for his interest in Sherlock Holmes. This set of prints is reproduced from original watercolor paintings. West did six drawings for this set, three of London and three of the generic moor, Moorland. The two that are not on display are “Thank You Cabby” (London) and “The Arrival” (Moorland).

WALL CASE VI - THE COLLECTION AND THE COLLECTORS

The Parker Family Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Collection

The Parker Family Conan Doyle Collection was started modestly over sixty years ago by Mr. Hyman Parker. Mr. Parker was an attorney, the director of the Michigan Employment Relations Committee of the State of Michigan, an Adjunct Associate Professor of Business Administration at the University of Michigan – Dearborn, and a committed fan of Conan Doyle, belonging to Holmes societies and publishing in the field. The charcoal portrait of Hyman Parker was drawn in 1964 by close family friend Sophie Fordon. Dr. Philip Parker says, “She did the drawing of my father with much love and affection.”

During Hyman Parker’s lifetime, he shared his Sherlockian interest and collecting with his older brother, Dr. Ben Parker, M.D. Dr. Ben Parker’s son, Dr. Bruce Parker, M.D.,

a Professor of Radiology and Pediatrics, has also been a Doyle collector and a teacher of Sherlock Holmes and Victorian detective fiction. Dr. Bruce Parker is a member of The Baker Street Irregulars. He has generously added his collection to the family’s collection at Michigan.

Philip Parker

After Hyman Parker’s death in 1975, his eldest son, Philip, took over the collection. Philip Parker, who received his Bachelor of Science degree in physics from the University of Michigan in 1966 and his M.D. degree from Wayne State University, has been a practicing psychiatrist in private practice for over 35 years, specializing in Adult AD/HD. He is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Wayne State University School of Medicine and teaches in both the Medical School and the Law School.

Dr. Philip Parker has expanded the collection exponentially, and it is this collection that constitutes the majority of the family collection at Michigan. Dr. Parker has focused especially on building the collection of Doyle’s writings other than Sherlock Holmes. As a psychiatrist, he has been intrigued with Doyle’s belief in spiritualism, and has been shaping the collection in order to emphasize its interdisciplinary nature and its research potential.

Ronald Burt De Waal. *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: a Classified and Annotated List of Materials Relating to Their Lives and Adventures*. New York: Bramhall House, 1974.

This bibliography, along with other standard ones for Conan Doyle, show Philip Parker’s annotations made during the building of the collection. De Waal’s book includes descriptions of all formats of material relating to Holmes and Watson, including manuscripts, films, recordings, comic strips, games, and other memorabilia.

UPCOMING EXHIBIT

**ARDIS:
PUBLISHING RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN
THE WEST**

**SEPTEMBER 8 - NOVEMBER 25
2009**